

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-12 are cancelled, and claims 13-26 are added.

Therefore, claims 13-26 are pending. No new matter is added. Reconsideration in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Formal Matter

The Office Action objects to the drawings, asserting that "the width of a leading end portion of the supporting member is the same or smaller than that of the leading end portion of the flat wire member" recited in claims 5 and 10 are not shown in the drawings.

Applicants respectfully disagree. Claims 5 and 10 are cancelled. Claims 17 and 22 correspond to cancelled claims 5 and 10, respectively.

Figs. 7 and 11 show width W_c of the leading end of a flat wire member 15, the width W_a of the leading end of a supporting plate 50b, and the width W_b of the plate. The specification describes at, for example, page 16, line 20-page 17, line 2 that $W_a = W_c \leq W_b$. In addition, Fig. 14 shows various widths W_f , W_g , W_h , W_i , W_j and W_k . Their dimensional relationships are described in the specification at, for example, page 30, line 14-page 31, line 2.

Because these claimed features are disclosed in the specification and detailed illustration is not essential for a proper understanding of the subject matter, 37 C.F.R. §1.83(a) is believed to be met by the labeled dimensions in Figs. 7 and 11. See MPEP §608.02(d).

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the subject matter of claims 17 and 22 are sufficiently shown in the drawings. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

II. The Pending Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 12 are cancelled by this Amendment. New claims 13, 14, 16, 18 and 24 partially correspond to cancelled claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 12, respectively.

Claim 13 recites, *inter alia*, that a second connector includes a plate-shaped supporting member for supporting a leading end position of a flat wire member, that the supporting member and a housing hold the leading end portion in such a way that the leading end portion is movable in its widthwise direction, and that a first connector includes a positioning member which is to engage a side of the leading end portion of a flat wire member to position the leading end portion in its widthwise direction relative to a contact arm when the leading end position is inserted into the first connector. These features are shown in Figs. 3, 6, and 12A-12C and described in sections in the specification associated to these figures.

Benze discloses a connector assembly with first and second connectors 22 and 24 that are coupled together. The second connector includes a terminal 82. However, the flat cables of Benze are respectively fixed by soldering to a male contact 72 and female contact 82 which are interconnected with each other upon the coupling of the connectors 22 and 24. See Col. 4, lines 6-8 and 55-57.

The Office Action identifies a member 112 of Benze as the supporting member. However, the member 112 is merely a back shell for holding the flat cable. Furthermore, the Office Action does not identify a housing as recited in the claims.

Moreover, a slot 118 of the back shell 112 is just large enough to accommodate the cable with its insulation on. See col. 5, lines 4-6.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the lead end of the flat cable is not movable in its widthwise direction. Applicants also respectfully assert that even if the slot is made larger than the width of the slot, it cannot move in its widthwise direction since the lead end portion of the flat wire is soldered onto the contacts 72 and 82.

The Office Action does not indicate what in Benze corresponds to the claimed positioning member. Benze does not appear to teach such a member that engages a side of the leading portion to position it in its widthwise direction as claimed. Benze also fails to disclose a leading end portion being supported in a condition that it is movable widthwise as claimed.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13 is patentably distinct from the applied prior art.

Claims 14, 16, 18 and 24 are allowable at least for their dependence on an allowable base claim. As such, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

B. The Office Action rejects claims 5 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Benze. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5 and 10 are cancelled. Claims 17 and 22 correspond to cancelled claims 5 and 10, respectively. Claims 17 and 22 are allowable at least for their dependence on allowable base claim 13. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

C. The Office Action rejects claims 3, 7-9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Benze in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,906,504 to Igarashi. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 3, 7-9 and 11 are cancelled. Claims 15, 19-21 and 23 correspond to cancelled claims 3, 7-9 and 11, and are allowable at least for their dependence on an allowable base claim 13 because Igarashi fails to overcome deficiencies of Benze. In particular, Igarashi has a leading end portion of a flat wire not exposed. On the other hand, it is exposed in the invention and inserted into the first connector to engage a contact arm to adjust its widthwise portion. As such, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

D. Claims 25 and 26 are added by this amendment.

Claim 25 recites that the flat wire member has a first end portion and second end portions, the first connector has a first hood portion and second hood portion, the second connector includes a first plate shaped supporter and a second plate shaped supporter for restrictively supporting the first and second end portions of the flat wire member, and a first housing and a second housing for respectively holding the first and second end portions of the flat wire member, and the first and second end portions of the flat wire member are respectively inserted into the first and second hood portions. These features are shown in Fig. 3 and described in sections in the specification associated with Fig. 3, for example.

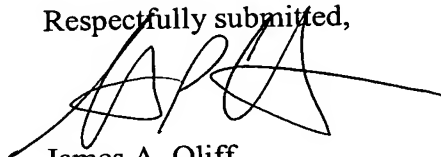
Claim 26 recites that the flat wire member is formed with a pair of recesses and the plate shaped supporter is formed with a pair of projections on the opposite sides of the supporter, the projections being respectively received by the recesses when the supporter supports the leading end portion of the flat wire member, the distance between the projection being larger than the distance between the bottom sides of the recesses to allow the leading end portion of the flat wire member to move in its widthwise direction. These features are shown in Fig. 14 and described in the specification sections associated with Fig. 14, for example.

Claims 25-26 are believed to define over the applied art.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 13-26 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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